

# You Can Make a Difference



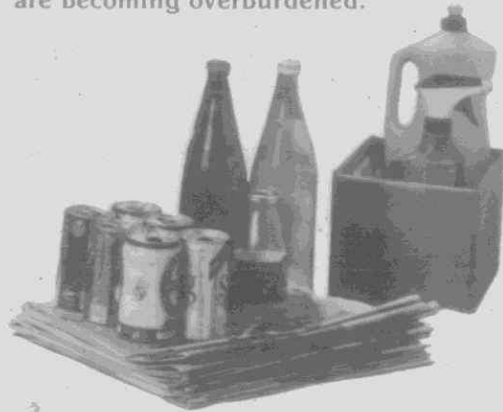
 Environment  
Environnement  
Ontario

**CCME**

Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment  
Le Conseil canadien des ministres de l'environnement

## Reducing Packaging Waste

When it comes to producing garbage, Canada is among the world leaders. Eighty percent of garbage now goes to landfills and a small amount to incinerators. There is growing recognition that we must cut-back because disposal systems are becoming overburdened.



Packaging is a significant component of solid waste. Once the package is discarded, more often than not it ends up in a landfill rather than being recycled or reused.

Packaging is defined as a material or item that is used to protect, contain or transport a commodity or product. A cereal box, a softdrink bottle and the box used for shipping your refrigerator — all are packages. Some packaging is essential to meet government regulations to ensure health and information needs of consumers and safety of products. Regulations on packaging also exist to ensure that products are not damaged during transit to the store or to your home.

In response to the growing concerns about waste, and packaging in particular, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) set up the National Task Force on Packaging with a mandate to develop a national action plan to reduce packaging waste. The Task Force produced the National Packaging Protocol, a document which was adopted by Environment Ministers in March of 1990. The Protocol sets out specific packaging waste reduction targets for Canadians:



Governments, industry and consumer and environmental groups that make up the National Task Force on Packaging are working together to reach these goals. You can play a part as well and here are some immediate suggestions on what you can do:

### Practice the 3 Rs:

- Reduce** ▲ Select products with as minimal packaging as possible.
- Reuse** ▲ Use an item again for the same or different purpose.

**Recycle** ▲ Separate from your garbage all packaging materials which can be recycled through curb side collection or a recycling depot.



Look at the suggestions on the back and see how **YOU** can help reduce, reuse and recycle packaging waste at **HOME**, at **WORK**, at **SCHOOL** and when **SHOPPING**.

If we all work together, we can reduce the packaging we send to landfills by 50% by the year 2000. Look around your home, office, school or shopping area and see if any of these suggestions can be put to use. If you see other ways to reduce packaging waste, put them into practice. To find out more, contact:

Public Information Centre  
Environment Ontario  
135 St. Clair Avenue West  
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5

Chairperson, National Task  
Force on Packaging  
Waste Management Branch  
Conservation and Protection  
Environment Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3

CCME Secretariat  
3rd Floor, Bldg 30  
139 Tuxedo Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3N 0H6

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# REDUCE PACKAGING WASTE

## While Shopping...

Choose products with minimal packaging or products with packaging that is reusable or recyclable or made from recycled materials.

Take reusable cotton or synthetic material bags with you when shopping. If you must use plastic or paper grocery bags take them back to the store to rebag your groceries.

Purchase beverage products, such as soft drinks, in refillable containers which can be returned to the store or recycled.

Look for durable multi-use products instead of single use disposable products.

Shop for unpackaged bulk goods where possible. This not only could save you money but will cut down on packaging waste. For example, at the hardware store, go to the nail or screw bin and fill a bag rather than buy



the individual packages that contain only a few screws or nails.

Buy products in large sizes such as a large bag of sugar rather than the individually wrapped packages for products you use frequently.

If you feel a product is over-packaged, talk to the manager of the store about your concerns and also write a letter to the manufacturer with suggestions for reducing packaging.

## At Home...



Reuse grocery bags as garbage bin-liners. As well, reuse jars or sturdy boxes for storage purposes in the garage, workshop or kitchen.

Turn empty containers into something useful around the home. For example: cleaned pump spray bottles can be reused for misting your plants.

Reuse envelopes.

Participate in your community recycling program. If one isn't available ask your municipality to start one.

Reuse gift-wrapping paper or find creative ways to present gifts.

## At School...



Pack lunches and drinks using a reusable lunch pail and thermos flask.

Organize special projects such as a survey of your school or home to see how much packaging is used, for what purpose and ways to reduce some of that packaging.

If your school cafeteria uses disposable dishes and utensils, ask that the disposable items be replaced by reusable dishes, cups, knives, forks and spoons.



## At Work...



Bring reusable cups, dishes and cutlery with you to work instead of using disposables. Keep a travel mug in your car, purse or briefcase.

If your work place doesn't have an in-house recycling program for used packages, start one. For example: find out if a local recycler can accept such items as: Cardboard, metal drums, plastic wrap and containers and wooden pallets.

# MAKE A DIFFERENCE!